

THE ZOOLOGIST.

A MONTHLY JOURNAL

OF

NATURAL HISTORY.

THIRD SERIES—VOL. XI.

EDITED BY

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DELECTANDO PARITERQUE MONENDO.

LONDON:

SIMPKIN, MARSHALL & CO., STATIONERS' HALL COURT.

1887.

LONDON:
WEST, NEWMAN AND CO., PRINTERS,
54, HATTON GARDEN, E.C.



PREFACE.

IN offering a few remarks by way of Preface to the Volume for 1887 which is concluded with the issue of the present number, the Editor desires to thank very cordially all those contributors who during the past year have given him their support and encouragement. The number and variety of the articles which have been contributed to the present Volume must strike every reader who glances at their titles, no less than the number of full-page illustrations which through the liberality of Mr. Newman have been expressly drawn and lithographed for this Journal. These plates it may be observed, as well as the articles which they have been designed to illustrate, are intended to bring home to the reader a more accurate impression of the actual appearance and habits of some of the smaller British Mammalia, which either from the nature of their haunts or from their retired mode of life are apt to escape the attention of all but the most observant. The plan pursued has been to have the original drawings made from the life if possible, or at least from perfectly fresh specimens while still in the flesh. In this way the natural features are preserved which otherwise would be lost in the process of drying and shrinking.

In the case of the Greenland Whale, *Balæna mysticetus*, the plate of this species issued with the April number was prepared from an original sketch by Capt. David Gray, drawn to scale after careful measurements of a recently captured specimen; so that it would be impossible to have any more satisfactory figure except by the aid of photography, which in the case of so large an animal could not well be applied.

As it is proposed to continue the series (so far as it may extend to the more uncommon species), those who may have opportunities for procuring specimens of such as are needed for illustration will materially aid the scheme by forwarding the same to the Editor. At present the *desiderata* are the rarer specimens of Bats which have not yet been figured in the series, and the three species of British Shrews.

At the same time any notes which may help in tracing the distribution of these mammals in the British Islands, or throw light on their life-history, will be very acceptable.

Attention may be here directed to the fact that comparatively little has been published on the Zoology of Wales, and the Editor notes with regret how few correspondents he has in any of the Welsh Counties. He would urge all those who may have friends in the

Principalities, able and willing to undertake an investigation of the fauna of the districts in which they reside, to acquaint them with the desirability of collecting information, and to point out to them the medium which this Journal affords for the publication of their observations.

To a certain extent these remarks will apply to some of the more remote parts of Ireland which, from the naturalist's point of view, are still imperfectly known.

It should be borne in mind that one of the chief objects of this Journal is to aid in the collection of materials for a better knowledge of the British Fauna than at present can be acquired from the perusal of any existing publications. And here it may be observed that the researches of its contributors should not be limited solely to the Vertebrates, but should extend also to the Invertebrates, excepting perhaps the *Insecta*, to the special study of which other journals (the 'Entomologist' and the 'Entomologists' Monthly Magazine') are already particularly devoted.

The recent establishment of a Marine Biological Laboratory at Plymouth cannot fail to be productive of the most important scientific results in this direction; at the same time, naturalists who are resident on other parts of the coast may materially aid the cause of science which such an institution is designed to promote, by communicating the results of their researches into the life-history of many marine forms, especially amongst the Mollusca and Crustacea, about which we are still profoundly ignorant. Unhappily, attention has been too much restricted to an examination of external form, the internal structure being almost entirely neglected. In this direction a wide field of labour remains to be explored.

It need not, however, be supposed that the scope of 'The Zoologist' is limited to the study of British Zoology, although this naturally claims a large share of attention. The Editor is always pleased to receive zoological communications, to whatever part of the world they may relate. It should not be forgotten that the British Islands form but a very small portion of the British Empire, and the more we can learn of the Zoology of other parts of the world, the better shall we be informed of the productions of our own country. In fact, without such extension of knowledge we should know next to nothing of the species which in our lists come under the designation of periodical migrants and accidental visitors.

In offering these few remarks by way of Preface to the volume for 1887, the Editor trusts that during the year to come he may continue to receive as heretofore, from all parts of the country, a proof in the shape of useful contributions to this Journal, that public interest in Zoology is in no way subsiding.

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The Greater Horse-shoe Bat
Myotis ferrum-equinum

